CONFERENCE ON DISARMAMENT

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LETTER DATED 15 JULY 1997 FROM THE PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF THE REPUBLIC OF ZIMBABWE ADDRESSED TO THE PRESIDENT OF THE CONFERENCE ON DISARMAMENT TRANSMITTING A COPY OF THE REPORT OF THE SECRETARY-GENERAL OF THE ORGANIZATION OF AFRICAN UNITY ON THE "ISSUE OF ANTI-PERSONNEL LANDMINES AND INTERNATIONAL EFFORTS TO REACH A TOTAL BAN", AND THE REPORT ON THE FIRST CONTINENTAL CONFERENCE OF AFRICAN EXPERTS ON LANDMINES HELD IN KEMPTON PARK, SOUTH AFRICA, FROM 19-21 MAY 1997

I have the honour to enclose herewith a copy of the report of the OAU Secretary-General on the Issue of Anti-Personnel Mines and International Efforts to Reach a Total Ban (Doc.CM/2009(LXVI) and the report on the first Continental Conference of African Experts on Landmines held in Kempton Park, South Africa, from 19-21 May 1997.

I should be grateful if the enclosed documents are circulated as official documents of the Conference on Disarmament.

(Signed): T J B Jokonya
Ambassador
Permanent Representative

GE.97-63420

"CM/Dec.363 (LXVI) - Report of the Secretary-General on the Issue of Anti-Personnel Mines and International Efforts to Reach a Total Ban (Doc. CM/2009(LXVI

Council:

(a) **TAKES NOTE** of the Report.

(b) **REAFFIRMS** all its previous resolutions on the question of anti-personnel mines, especially resolutions CM/Res.1593 (LXII) and CM/Res.1628 (LXIII);

(c) **ENDORSES** the Plan of Action adopted by the First continental conference of African Mine Experts held in Kempton Park, South Africa, from 19 to 21 May 1997, and **COMMENDS** the OAU Secretary-General for this laudable initiative in that connection;

(d) **RECOGNIZES** the contribution of the establishment of sub-regional anti-personnel mines free-zones to the ultimate goal of achieving a total ban at the level of the African Continent;

(e) **STRESSES** the need that the problem of mines be addressed in a coordinated, multi-faceted and balanced manner banning comprehensively anti-personnel mines and intensifying efforts and actions with regard to mine-clearance and mine victim assistance especially in Africa;

(f) **ADOPTS** as a goal the elimination of anti-personnel mines in Africa and the establishment of Africa as an anti-personnel mines - Free Zone;

(g) **URGES** Member States to fully and actively participate in the Ottawa process, particularly the meetings scheduled for Brussels (24 - 27 June, 1997), Oslo (September 1997) and Ottawa at which a treaty for the total prohibition of anti-personnel mines is expected to be signed;

(h) **CALLS ON** all Member States to adhere as early as possible to the 1980 United Nations Convention on prohibition or restriction on the use of certain weapons which may be deemed to be excessively injurious or to have indiscriminate effects, and its protocol II if they have not already done so, and **APPEALS** to all

Member States to adhere to the amended protocol II as well as the new Protocol IV on blinding laser weapons;

(i) **APPEALS** to the International Community to render to the affected African countries all necessary assistance to enable them to effectively carry out mine clearance and mine victim assistance operations, and facilitate implementation of the Kempton Park Plan of Action through increased mobilization of resources;

(j) **UNDERSCORES** the moral responsibility of the countries which masterminded the emplacement of mines in Africa during the Second World war and/or colonial conflicts and **URGES** the said countries to devote a part of their resources, in particular, a reasonable percentage of their military budget to mine clearance and assistance to mine victims in the affected African countries;

(k) **CALLS UPON** those countries responsible for infesting the African countries with mines to provide those affected countries with all necessary information on demining including data, technical assistance, assessment of surveys specially maps as well as the movement of illegal mine transfers;

(l) **REITERATES** the urgency and the need for inter-African cooperation in mine clearance and assistance to mine victims, and **EMPHASIZES** the primordial role to be played by the OAU in coordinating actions in those areas, as part of implementation of the plan of Action;

(m) **REQUESTS** the Secretary-General to monitor implementation of the present resolution as well as the Kempton Park Plan of Action, and submit a report thereon to the next ordinary session of the Council of Ministers."

PLAN OF ACTION OF THE FIRST CONTINENTAL CONFERENCE OF AFRICAN EXPERTS ON LANDMINES

The first Continental Conference of African Experts on Landmines was held in Kempton Park, the Republic of South Africa, from 19 to 21 May 1997. The Conference, which was attended by 40 Member States of the OAU, UN specialised agencies, a wide spectrum of representatives of the donor community and Non-Governmental Organizations, adopted the following Plan of Action:

I. ON POLICY ON LANDMINES

The Conference discussed African policies on anti-personnel landmines, the momentum towards a global ban on anti-personnel landmines, legal aspects of humanitarian law pertaining to landmines, landmine free-zones with reference to the Organization of American States (OAS) and an African landmine-free-zone.

Within the framework of the implementation of the relevant Organization of African Unity (OAU) resolution, participants agreed:

1. To stress the need that the problem of landmines be addressed in a coordinated and multi-faceted manner banning comprehensively anti-personnel landmines and intensifying efforts with regard to mine-clearance and mine victim assistance.

2. To adopt as a goal the elimination of anti-personnel landmines in Africa and the establishment of Africa as an Anti-Personnel Landmine-Free-Zone.

3. All States should end all deployments of anti-personnel landmines and to establish national prohibitions such as those already adopted on the African continent on their use, production, stockpiling, transfer and their destruction.

4. Urged all States to participate actively in the Brussels Conference, 24-27 June 1997, the Oslo Conference in September 1997, which is integral to the process leading to the negotiation and signature of a legally binding international agreement to ban ant-personnel landmines in Ottawa in December 1997.

5. For those States which are not yet Parties, to adhere to the 1980 United Nations Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons (CCW), including the Protocol II on landmines (as amended on 3 May 1996); for current States party to this Convention to adhere to its amended Protocol II at the earliest possible date to ensure its earliest possible entry into force.

6. To promote the strongest possible resolution on the banning of anti-personnel landmines to be considered by Heads of State

and Government at the OAU Summit Meeting in Harare, Zimbabwe, 2-4 June 1997.

II. ON MINE CLEARANCE

The Conference discussed at length mine clearance issues which included the building of national capacities for mine clearance, setting local priorities, standards and technologies and inter-African cooperation.

Noting the crucial link between the drive for the total ban of mines and mine clearance, the participants agreed as follows:

1. In building capacity for mine clearance there is a need to create national, subregional and regional coordinating and strategic planning bodies. Subregional organizations such as SADC, IGAD and others and also the OAU could play such a role. Further, national capacities for mine clearance should be simple, manageable and sustainable.

2. The challenge in demining is the development of institutions rather than mine clearance itself; full attention should, therefore, be devoted to this task.

3. Data bases should be established at the national, sub-regional and regional levels; which would create the necessary management information system on the extent of mine problems, on techniques of demining, on results of demining, the assessment of surveys and the movement of illegal mine transfers.

4. At present demining is a slow process - methods and technology must be created to increase the rate of demining; with regards to this, the need for the employment of integrated technology is of importance.

5. The task of mine clearance in Africa is so vast that the public sector and commercial enterprises should operate in parallel reinforcing each other's efforts. Further, the Armed Forces of African States should be allowed to play a proper role in demining.

6. There is a need to involve national authorities, at various levels in the building of national capacities.

7. In building capacities finance will be a critical constraint. Hence there is need to exert efforts to mobilize financial resources. But requests for financial assistance should be backed by appropriate project feasibility studies.

8. The aim of mine awareness should be to reduce mine risk through the adoption of sustainable safe behaviour, and to ensure the close involvement of the affected community and to

ensure that priorities in mine awareness programmes are set by the members of the community themselves; lessons learned and experiences gained must be institutionalized, and interactive communication must be adopted.

9. Efficient and effective demining efforts should be made to develop standards and guidelines for deminers and independent quality assurance and quality control established.

10. For successful demining inter-African cooperation is seen as a vital and a crucial element; such cooperation should cover such areas as political/diplomatic action, logistics, technical, financial, clearing operations, research and development as well as the transfer of technology.

III. ON LANDMINE SURVIVORS ASSISTANCE

The Conference discussed a wide range of issues relating to landmine survivors assistance. The following aspects, inter alia, were covered:

- Rehabilitation and Social Reintegration
- Training
- Resources: human, facilities, funds
- Development of (a) database(s)

Against the background of efforts to achieve a total ban on anti-personnel mines, and to clear Africa of existing landmines, the participants agreed as follows:

1. Governments in Africa, and the OAU, should address the plight of victims and survivors and take renewed cognizance of their problems with a view to meeting the health and social needs of all landmine survivors in Africa.

2. To be optimally effective in bringing more and higher quality assistance to landmine survivors in the long term, a structured flow and analysis of information about the entire mine problem in any given country was needed.

3. Priorities for the allocation of scarce resources amongst mine clearance projects, community mine awareness programmes, and the provision for the health and social needs of landmine survivors can only be set by cooperative and coordinated efforts on the part of:

   - Local authorities and national governments
   - The OAU and its specialised agencies, such as ARI
   - The UN system and its agencies
   - The NGO community
   - The ICRC and National Red Crescent or Red Cross Societies.

4. To urge governments to adopt a policy aiming at the establishment of national Mine Information Systems.

5. To urge governments to include the active participation of landmine survivors in the formulation, the decision making process and the execution of national policy and legislation in respect of articles that affect them. Concomitantly, survivors should influence their governments' positions in the formulation of international humanitarian treaties.

6. To encourage communities and the health services of mine-infected countries to maintain and increase their readiness to deal with mine injuries long after armed conflict has ended, while building their social and institutional capacities to deal with an ever increasing number of disabled.

7. The relevant regional and national institutions to co-ordinate their efforts and to exchange information on their available medical facilities and capacities and to provide modes of accessing them through a central African clearing-house in order to improve and increase assistance to landmine survivors.

8. To increase support to all training centres and institutes for the combined or joint use of all medical, social, psychological and other relevant measures and to organise regular regional and continental training sessions for civilian and/or military health workers on the treatment and rehabilitation of the mine-injured.

9. In order to meet the psychological and social needs of mine survivors, Governments should quantify the numbers of survivors and encourage local NGOs or National Red Cross/Red Crescent societies to initiate appropriate programmes, with the support of international partners, to increase access to medical care and rehabilitation for all victims and survivors in countries at war or affected by landmines in the post-conflictual period.

10. Governments should establish national Support Funds for landmine survivors and international donors should contribute to these Funds.

IV. ON INTERNATIONAL COOPERATION AND FINANCE

On international cooperation and finance, the Conference:

1. Reiterated the appeal of the OAU to the International Community, International financial agencies, and the private sector working in the military field to provide African countries affected by mines with all the necessary assistance for the demining of their countries. As an essential component of the efforts towards the elimination of mines,

this assistance should comprise financial and technical components as well as the training of deminers.

2. Underscored the moral responsibility of the powers which laid the mines during the Second World War and independence wars, and wished that these powers should devote a reasonable percentage of their military budget to mine clearance in the concerned African countries.

3. Underlined the need for international cooperation, including close South South cooperation, in order to support effort towards demining and assistance to victims with a view to accelerating the realisation of the objectives of total elimination of mines.

4. Requested the General Secretariat of the OAU, bearing in mind the experience of other International Organisations, to establish a mechanism to enhance the mobilisation of International Community so as to assist the African countries affected by anti-personnel landmines.